

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5325
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 1808

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: JSP ON EVE OF CONVENTION

REF: TOKYO 9280

SUMMARY. WITH RECENT DECLINE OF RULING LDP TO THIN
MAJORITY IN LOWER HOUSE AND WITH POSSIBILITY IT WILL LOSE
ITS UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY IN JULY ELECTIONS, MUCH ATTENTION
HAS FOCUSED RECENTLY ON JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP),
JAPAN'S SECOND LARGEST PARTY (124 OF 511 LOWER HOUSE
SEATS). IN POLL PUBLISHED JANUARY 21, HOWEVER, ABOUT
HALF THE RESPONDENTS CONSIDERED JSP UNDEPENDABLE, OLD,
AND NO LONGER A "REFORMIST" PARTY. DECLINE IN PUBLIC
APPEAL APPARENTLY IS DUE TO LONGSTANDING HANDICAPS OF
INDECISIVE LEADERSHIP AND DEBILITATING INTERNAL DISCORD.
JSP'S ANNUAL CONVENTION FEBRUARY 8-10 WILL BE WATCHED
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CLOSELY FOR ANY SIGN THAT PARTY WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME
THESE OBSTACLES SUFFICIENTLY TO WORK MORE RESPONSIBLY IN
OPPOSITION OR PUT TOGETHER ALTERNATIVE TO CONSERVATIVE
RULE. CHANCES OF FINDING SUCH SIGNS ARE SLIM.
DESPITE JSP'S DISARRAY AS CONVENTION OPENS, PARTY
FEELS PRESSURE TO PRESENT RESPONSIBLE FRONT, THEREBY ACKNOW-
LEDGING ELECTORATE'S PREFERENCE FOR MIDDLE-ROAD AND

SHOWING SENSITIVITY TO NEED TO ELICIT GREATER PUBLIC
CONFIDENCE AS CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY SHRINKS. MORE
REASONABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD SECURITY TREATY AND US RELATIONS
IN GENERAL ARE ONE ASPECT OF SEARCH FOR NEW IMAGE. END
SUMMARY.

1. JSP' AS JAPAN'S ONLY LARGE, NATION-WIDE PARTY, HAS
BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE MEMBERS WHOSE VIEWS AND IDEOLO-
GICAL LEANINGS ARE DIVERSE. LIKE LDP, JSP IS COMPOSED
OF FACTIONS, BUT UNLIKE LDP, ITS FACTIONAL LINES TEND
TO BE DRAWN ON BASIS OF IDEOLOGY. PRESENT FACTIONAL
SPECTRUM BEGINS ON "RIGHT" WITH TWENTY LOWER HOUSE
DIETMEN LED BY SABURO EDA. THEY ARE WESTERN-ORIENTED,
FAVORING LESS IDEOLOGICAL BRAND OF "HUMANE SOCIALISM."
TO EDA'S LEFT ARE TWENTY-FOUR GENERALLY MODERATE LOWER
HOUSE MEMBERS LED BY SEIICHI KATSUMATA. TO THEIR LEFT
IS KOZO SASAKI FACTION, MOST OF WHOSE TWENTY-FOUR MEMBERS
ARE PRO-CHINA MARXISTS. ABOUT FORTY DIETMEN BELONG TO
LOOSELY-KNIT, NON-IDEOLOGICAL "STUDY GROUP," CALLED
"NEW CURRENT SOCIETY," FORMED IN 1973; REMAINDER OF DIET
MEMBERS ARE EITHER UNAFFILIATED OR BELONG TO SPLINTER
GROUPS.

2. HISTORY OF JSP SINCE WORLD WAR II HAS BEEN DOMINATED
BY INTER-FACTIONAL DISPUTES, MOST OF WHICH PITTED MODERATES
AGAINST DOCTRINAIRE RADICALS. ON TWO OCCASIONS SINCE WAR
THESE DIVISIONS LED TO SPLITS IN PARTY: IN 1952 OVER
US-JAPAN PEACE TREATY, AND IN 1959 OVER US-JAPAN MUTUAL
SECURITY TREATY. WHILE LEFT WING HAS TENDED TO REFLECT
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SCHISMS RELATED TO SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE, AND INTERNAL
DYNAMICS HAVE BECOME EVEN MORE CONFUSED, CURRENT DIFFERENCES
ARE LIKELY TO FALL SHORT OF FURTHER PARTY SPLINTERING.

3. LATEST CONFRONTATION WITHIN JSP HAS COME ABOUT WITH
GRADUAL EMERGENCE OVER PAST DECADE OF HARDCORE GROUP OF
PRO-SOVIET MARXIST PURISTS CALLED SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION.
UNDER INTELLECTUAL MENTORSHIP OF RETIRED PROFESSOR ITSURO
SAKISAKA, DOCTRINAIRE MARXIST EDUCATED IN BERLIN IN 1920'S,
SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION NOW CONTROLS MOST OF PARTY'S
PREFECTURAL OFFICES, AS WELL AS JSP'S YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND
PUBLICATION AND PROPAGANDA BUREAU. SAKISAKA'S ZEALOUS
AND UNCOMPROMISING YOUNG DISCIPLES HAVE ESTABLISHED
POWER BASE NOT IN DIET FACTIONS OR IN UNION HEADQUARTERS
BUT WITHIN PARTY RAN-AND-FILE. WITH ROUGHLY 20,000 OF
JSP'S TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF 50,000, ASSOCIATION WILL HAVE
EFFECTIVE VETO POWER AT FEBRUARY CONVENTION OVER PERSONNEL
AND PROGRAM DECISIONS.

4. CONFRONTATION WITHIN PARTY WORSENERED IN LATE 1975 WHEN MODERATE LEADER EDA BEGAN ACTIVELY TO PROMOTE ALLIANCE BETWEEN JSP AND TWO SMALL CENTRIST OPPOSITION PARTIES, CLEAN GOVERNMENT (CGP) AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST (DSP), TO LAY FOUNDATIONS FOR CENTER-LEFT COALITION THAT MIGHT SUCCEED DECLINING LDP. TOWARD THIS END, EDA FOUNDED SUPPOSEDLY NON-POLITICAL "SOCIETY TO THINK ABOUT A NEW JAPAN" (REFTEL). (THIS MOVE WAS LATEST OF SEVERAL EDA HAS MADE IN PAST FIFTEEN YEARS TO NUDGE PARTY TOWARD MODERATION.)

5. SAKISAKA'S ASSOCIATION OPPOSED EDA'S PLANS ON GROUNDS THAT, BY EXCLUDING JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY (JCP), IT WOULD BE "NON-REVOLUTIONARY." WHILE ASSOCIATION IS SOMETIMES ANTAGONISTIC TOWARDS ITS IDEOLOGICAL NEIGHBOR, JCP, ACCUSING IT OF PRO-CHINA HERESY AND OF FAVORING "OPPORTUNISTIC" GAINS AT EXPENSE OF MARXIST PURITY, IT HAS
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INSISTED THAT JCP BE INCLUDED IN ANY OPPOSITION COALITION TO AVOID ISOLATION OF MARXIST CAMP.

6. GROWTH OF ASSOCIATION CAUSED OPPOSITION TO IT WITHIN PARTY TO BROADEN TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT BEFORE DECEMBER 5, 1976 LOWER HOUSE ELECTION MAJORITY OF JSP DIETMEN,

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

INCLUDING THOSE ON LEFT, OPPOSED IT. ANTI-ASSOCIATION MOOD WAS SOON COMPLICATED, HOWEVER, BY DEFEAT OF ALL THREE MAJOR FACTION LEADERS IN ELECTION. EDA, SASAKI AND KATSUMATA LOST THEIR SEATS PARTLY BECAUSE THEY WERE OVERLY COMPLACENT AND DID NOT CAMPAIGN ENOUGH, BUT ALSO BECAUSE PARTY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS DID NOT CAMPAIGN FOR THEM. ALTHOUGH THEIR FACTIONS ARE STILL ACTIVE, SOME OF THEIR MEMBERS ARE NOW SHOWING WILLINGNESS TO REACH ACCOMMODATION WITH ASSOCIATION. SO FAR, ABOUT TEN DIETMEN, MOSTLY FROM SASAKI FACTION, HAVE LEANED TOWARD JOINING "MARCH SOCIETY," A FACTION-LIKE GROUPING THAT ASSOCIATION SET UP IN SPRING OF 1976 TO ACT AS BRIDGE BETWEEN ITSELF AND LEFTWING DIETMEN. STILL, THOSE OPPOSED TO MARCH SOCIETY-- AND SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION--REMAIN STRONG ENOUGH TO WARD OFF INITIATIVES THEY OPPOSE. THUS, GOING INTO CONVENTION, BOTH SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION AND THOSE OPPOSED TO IT ARE POISED IN UNEASY EQUILIBRIUM, EACH ABLE TO BLOCK OTHER'S
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PROPOSALS, BUT UNABLE TO ASSURE SUCCESS OF ITS OWN.

7. IN EARLY JANUARY, FOR EXAMPLE, EDA SUBMITTED ACTION-POLICY RECOMMENDATION TO JSP CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WHICH PROPOSED THAT PARTY PREPARE FOR FALL OF LDP BY EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF FORMING OPPOSITION PARTY COALITION EXCLUDING COMMUNISTS. FEARFUL OF PROVOKING ASSOCIATION'S IRE ON EVE OF CONVENTION, CHAIRMAN NARITA AND SECRETARY-GENERAL ISHIBASHI SHELVED EDA'S PROPOSAL IN FAVOR OF LONG-STANDING "ALL OPPOSITION PARTY" COALITION CONCEPT, WHICH WAS WRITTEN INTO CONVENTION'S DRAFT 1977 ACTION PLAN. SINCE DSP AND CGP HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THEY WOULD NEVER PARTICIPATE IN COALITION WITH JSP, HOWEVER, "ALL OPPOSITION" POLICY IS CLEARLY UNWORKABLE AND LIKE OTHER INTELLECTUALLY CONCEIVED PROGRAMS, IS CERTAIN TO ADD TO JSP'S REPUTATION FOR STERILE, UNREALISTIC POSTURING.

8. WHILE NARITA IS ACKNOWLEDGED EVERYWHERE IN PARTY TO BE WEAK LEADER, PARADOXICALLY HE IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN. NEITHER WING OF PARTY FINDS LEFT-LEANING BUT NON-ALIGNED NARITA SO UNACCEPTABLE AS TO RISK JEOPARDIZING SHAKY INTERNAL UNITY BY JETTISONING HIM. SEC GEN ISHIBASHI, WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED AS COMPETENT IF SOME

TIMES CONTROVERSIAL, PRESENTS A SOMEWHAT EASIER TARGET, BUT HE TOO IS LIKELY TO BE RETAINED.

9. IT APPEARS THAT JSP'S INTERNAL DIVISIONS, INCOHERENT LEADERSHIP AND INABILITY TO PRESENT REALISTIC POLICY INITIATIVES WILL PERSIST. SIGNS ARE THAT CHRONIC TENDENCY TOWARD POLARIZATION WILL NOT END EVEN IF PRESENT ANTAGONISM BETWEEN SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION AND REST OF PARTY SOMEHOW DIMINISHES. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE SPECULATED THAT EDA AND MODERATES MIGHT BOLT PARTY IF ASSOCIATION'S POWER CONTINUES TO GROW, BUT WE DISCOUNT THIS POSSIBILITY, INASMUCH AS EDA LACKS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES NECESSARY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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INDUCE SIZEABLE BODY OF MODERATES TO GO WITH HIM. MOREOVER, ANY POTENTIAL BOLTING DIETMEN, KNOWING THEY WOULD BE CUT OFF FROM SUPPORT GROUPS IN SOHYO UNIONS, WOULD BE DISINCLINED TO RISK FUTURES IN POLITICAL WILDERNESS. INSTEAD, THEY WILL PROBABLY STAY IN PARTY AND CONTINUE ATTEMPTS TO PROMOTE MODERATE LINE.

10. GIVEN INTERNAL DISUNITY, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY JSP WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN, MUCH LESS TAKE LEAD IN FORMING COALITION GOVERNMENT. MAIN OBSTACLE, REFLECTING INTERNAL DIVISIONS, IS PARTY'S INABILITY TO DECIDE ON WHICH SORT OF COALITION IT FAVORS--CENTRIST OR RADICAL. SIMILARLY, IF LDP SOMEHOW MAINTAINS ITSELF IN POWER, JSP WILL PROBABLY NOT MOVE AWAY FROM ITS DECADES-OLD OBSTRUCTIONIST ROLE IN DIET OPPOSITION. ITS DISPOSITION IS TOWARD COURSE OF LEAST RESISTANCE AND LEAST STRAIN ON ITS INTERNAL UNITY. JSP CAN BE COUNTED ON TO SNIPE AT WHATEVER TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY LDP PROVIDES, BUT DESPITE IMPROVED OPPORTUNITY FOR A DYNAMIC OPPOSITION PARTY TO APPEAL TO ELECTORATE, JSP SHOWS NO SIGNS OF BECOMING ONE.

11. PARADOX OF THIS UNPROMISING PORTRAIT OF JSP ON CONVENTION EVE IS THAT WHILE PONDEROUS IDEOLOGICAL RHETORIC AND INTERNAL FACTIONAL MANEUVERS ARE CONDUCIVE TO PARAMNESIA, PARTY HAS ACTUALLY COME A LONG WAY TOWARDS MORE RESPONSIBLE POSTURE, PARTICULARLY TOWARDS US. FIRST JSP DELEGATION TO US IN EIGHTEEN YEARS, LED BY EDA, TOOK PLACE IN 1975, AND FULL-FLEDGED PARTY MISSION LED BY CHAIRMAN IS BEING PLANNED FOR THIS SPRING. BEFORE DECEMBER 1976 ELECTIONS, NARITA ANNOUNCED "FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE" IN REGARD TO JSP'S NEAR-SACROSANCT DEMAND FOR ABOLITION OF US-JAPAN SECURITY TREATY, AND, FAR FROM OPPOSING RECENT VISIT BY VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AS IT HAD PRESIDENT FORD'S, PARTY LEADERSHIP WANTED TO CALL ON VP. WILLY-NILLY, JSP HAS TO READ ELECTION RESULTS AS PREFERENCE FOR MIDDLE ROAD, AND ALSO HAS TO THINK

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MORE SERIOUSLY THAN IT HAD TO WHEN FUTURE CONSERVATIVE
MAJORITIES SEEMED ASSURED ABOUT NEED TO PERSUADE ELECTORATE JSP
COULD PARTICIPATE RESPONSIBLY IN GOVERNMENT. FINALLY,
ALL SAID AND DONE, JSP DOUBTLESS SERVES AS BRAKE ON JCP
GROWTH.
SHOESMITH

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Message Attributes

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SAS ID: 3374978
Secure: OPEN
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TAGS: PINT, JA, JSP
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